

For immediate release:
April 1, 2005

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Statewide Coalitions Encourage Mothers-to-Be To Quit Smoking *For a healthy mom and a healthy baby!*

May 2005- In recognition of Mother's Day, coalitions around the state are encouraging expectant mothers to call the Toll-Free Kansas Tobacco Quitline (**1-866-KAN-STOP**) to get free, helpful advice on quitting smoking.

Research shows smoking harms an unborn baby. When an expectant mother smokes, the baby gets less oxygen. Lack of oxygen can cause the baby to grow more slowly and gain less weight in the womb. Smoking during pregnancy has also been linked to early labor, low birth weight and other pregnancy complications.

"Even though we now know the danger of smoking during pregnancy, fewer than one out of four women quit smoking once they become pregnant," says Julia Francisco, Director of the Kansas Tobacco Use Prevention Program. "Our hope is that the Quitline can be a resource and source of encouragement for expectant mothers, helping them to stop smoking."

According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, nearly 24% of women in childbearing age (18-44 years old) are current smokers. Data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows **low birth weight is a leading cause of infant deaths**. More than 300,000 babies die each year in the United States because of low birth weight. Many of these deaths are linked to smoking. According to the 2003 Live Birth Records, 12% of mothers in Kansas were smokers during their pregnancy, or about 4,800 women. Smoking during pregnancy is also linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and an increased risk of respiratory complications.

Quitting Tips for Expectant Mothers:

- Write down your reasons for quitting. Keep the list handy and look at it when you are tempted to smoke.
- Choose a "quit day." When that day arrives, throw away all your cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays.
- Stay away from activities, people and places that make you feel like smoking.
- Ask your partner or a friend to help you quit, and call that person when you feel like smoking.

- Ask your health care provider about quitting aids such as patches, gum, nasal spray and medications. Don't start using these without your health care provider's okay especially if you are pregnant.
- Don't get discouraged if you don't quit completely right away. Keep trying. Quitting is a difficult, but very important decision for the health of you and your baby.

For more information on quitting, contact the Kansas Tobacco Quitline, toll-free at **1-866-KAN-STOP** (1-866-526-7867) or visit www.kanstop.org.



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